

Dueling views in Silicon Valley sex discrimination suit

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A calculating schemer burning with resentment and with a thirst for a quick buck or an innocent victim of sickening sexual discrimination?

Those were the contrasting impressions presented to jurors on Thursday of a woman behind a \$16 million sex discrimination law suit against a renowned Silicon Valley [venture capital firm](#).

Ellen Pao's fourth day on the witness stand began with cross-examination painting her as someone who kept a list of those she resented and out to cash in with a carefully planned legal case against Kleiner Perkins Caufield and Byers (KPCB).

Pao's attorney Therese Lawless then got a chance to question Pao anew, seeking to offset any damage done by tenacious KPCB lawyer Lynne Hermle.

Pao contends that she and other women were passed over for advancement and endured harassment in a male-oriented culture.

Despite repeated objections by Hermle, Lawless had Pao tell the San Francisco courtroom of a conversation with a KPCB partner during which he purportedly described the venture firm as an "old boys' club" in which women had it tougher than men.

Both Lawless and Hermle asked Pao about a business flight on a private jet during which she maintained some male colleagues engaged in

inappropriate conversation that included talk of porn stars.

Hermle challenged Pao about a chart she made of co-workers she resented, including a married partner with whom she had an affair and high-profile partner John Doerr, who she has referred to as a mentor.

While the defense lawyer referred to it as a "resentment chart," Pao said she was simply "working through some of the feelings" at the time.

Jurors will not hear about financial trouble, including tax liens and bankruptcy filings, faced by Pao and her husband.

Judge Harold Kahn denied a motion by Hermle to introduce such evidence, which would be meant to show Pao was motivated by money and not a fight for gender equality.

Delving into the financial woes "would likely create an unseemly sideshow" that could confuse jurors, Kahn said in his ruling.

'It was very clear'

Hermle brought out during trial that Pao delayed meeting a KPCB investigator hired to dig into her complaint, but that she devoted much time and effort to cultivating email trails and gathering hundreds of thousands of digital documents to give lawyers handling her law suit.

"Ellen made it very clear that she did not want to participate in an investigation," testified Eric Keller, who was KPCB chief operating officer when Pao filed her harassment complaint.

Keller said under questioning that Pao was focused on money and never mentioned anything of battling for gender equality.

Keller recounted Pao telling him that she wanted an exit package of at least "eight figures," which he took to mean anywhere from \$10 million to \$99 million.

Pao's lawsuit asks for \$16 million in pay she contends she would have made if she had not been fired from KPCB in late 2012.

She was hired in 2005 to be an office manager for Doerr and years later got a chance at an investment role.

KPCB was established in 1972 and became a revered Silicon Valley venture capital firm by backing successes such as Facebook, Amazon and Google.

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